

VZCZCXRO4435
RR RUEHIK
DE RUEHAG #0008 0571535
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 261535Z FEB 10
FM AMCONSUL HAMBURG
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0316
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0280
RUCNFRG/FRG COLLECTIVE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0002
RUEHAG/AMCONSUL HAMBURG 0362

UNCLAS HAMBURG 000008

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GM](#) [HU](#)

SUBJECT: DISMANTLING THE IRON CURTAIN -- A REMEMBRANCE

[1](#)1. (U) On February 19, 2010, Consul General Karen Johnson attended the 654th St. Matthew's Banquet at the Hamburg Rathaus, an event hosted by the city government since 1356. This year's event, attended by 400 guests, commemorated the 1989 Peaceful Revolution. Speakers included Hamburg's First Mayor Ole von Beust; Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Germany's former Foreign Minister; Marianne Birthler, the Federal Commissioner of the Records of the Stasi Archives; and Prof. Dr. Laszlo Solyom, President of Hungary.

[1](#)2. (U) In his keynote speech, President Dr. Solyom emphasized that Hungary has progressed significantly since the fall of communism. According to Dr. Solyom, Hungary has established a respected Constitutional Court system and ensured greater liberties, such as freedom of speech, for Hungarian citizens. The President also stated that Hungary has enacted environmental protection provisions that are stronger than the European average. He concluded that his nation has earned the right to demand that its strengthened institutions be trusted by the international community.

[1](#)3. (U) Comment: The St. Matthew's Banquet is a time-honored tradition which emphasizes Hamburg's long history as an economic, cultural, and political power. This year's theme of honoring the Peaceful Revolution -- foreshadowing as it does the upcoming 20-year anniversary of German reunification -- has set the tone for a host of local commemorations of this historic period. End comment.

[1](#)4. (U) Copies of all four speeches have been forwarded to the German and Hungarian desks.

JOHNSON